DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 172 CE 018 328

AUTHOR Ampene, E. Kwasi
TITLE Persistent Issues in African Education. Occasional Papers in Continuing Education, Number 16.
INSTITUTION British Columbia Univ., Vancouver. Center for Continuing Education.
PUB DATE Jun 78
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented to the Faculty of Education (Vancouver, Canada, March 16, 1978)
AVAILABLE FROM Centre for Continuing Education, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada V6T 1W5 ($1.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Adult Education; Colonialism; Developing Nations; Dropout Problems; Educational Change; *Educational Development; *Educational Finance; Educational History; Educationally Disadvantaged; Educational Needs; *Educational Opportunities; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Illiteracy; Language Handicaps; *Language Role; Postsecondary Education; Problems
IDENTIFIERS *Africa

ABSTRACT

Important issues in African education involve the effects of the colonial education system on African subjects and their countries' political and socio-economic development. Of interest are some countries' efforts to correct dysfunctions resulting from the colonial system. Following independence, the state of education in many African countries in 1960 may be summarized as follows: (1) there was a fairly widespread primary education system with enrollment at about 41% of school age population; (2) adult illiteracy ranged from 50% to 99%; (3) educational expenditure has grown considerably; and (4) there was uncertainty as to the relevance of the educational system to the challenges of the newly independent countries. After independence, there were many efforts to expand educational opportunities. Between 1950-1960, enrollment in about forty primary sector countries increased 3-26%. Problems such as high formal education costs, high unemployment for school leavers, alienation of some educated persons from their culture/communities, and a multiplicity of languages, and lack of educational opportunities have led to a search for functional and less expensive education. Political and social action by many groups in addition to ministries of education will be required to resolve the complex problems of African educational systems. (CSS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Occasional Papers in Continuing Education

NUMBER 16, JUNE 1978

ED162172

CE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Kulich

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PERSISTENT ISSUES IN AFRICAN EDUCATION

E. KWASI AMPENE

CE 018 828

CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, VANCOUVER, CANADA

Occasional Paper Number 9, February 1975. *ADULT EDUCATION IN VANCOUVER BEFORE 1914* by Gordon R. Selman. Price $1.00.

Occasional Paper Number 10, April, 1975. *A DECADE OF TRANSITION: THE EXTENSION DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA 1960 to 1970* by Gordon R. Selman. Price $1.00.

Occasional Paper Number 11, March, 1976. *MARKETING CONTINUING EDUCATION: A STUDY OF PRICE STRATEGIES* by Marvin E. Lamoureux. Price $1.50.

Occasional Paper Number 12, December, 1976. *ADULT EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA DURING THE DEPRESSION* by Gordon R. Selman. Price $1.50.

Occasional Paper Number 13, January, 1977. *MASTERS OF THEIR OWN DESTINY: A COMPARISON OF THE THOUGHT OF COADY AND FREIRE* by Anne Kathleen Armstrong. Price $1.50.

Occasional Paper Number 14, February, 1977. *A CHRONOLOGY OF ADULT EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA* by Gordon R. Selman. Price $1.50.

Occasional Paper Number 15, March, 1978. *TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A DISTANCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF BRITAIN'S OPEN UNIVERSITY (WESBROOK MEMORIAL ALUMNI LECTURE)* by Sir Walter Perry. Price $1.00.

This series of occasional papers is published by the Centre for Continuing Education of The University of British Columbia.

Copies of Occasional Paper Number 16 are available from the Centre for Continuing Education, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada V6T 1W5, at a price of $1.00 per copy. Please make cheque or money order payable to The University of British Columbia.

CONTENTS

	Page
About This Series and This Paper	i
Introduction	1
Education Under Colonialism	2
Efforts to Expand Educational Opportunities Soon After Independence	4
The Conference of African Ministers of Education in Addis Ababa (1961) and After	5
Unemployment Among School Leavers	6
Alienation of Educated Persons From Traditional Culture	8
Illiteracy and Low Priority for Adult and Non-formal Education	8
The Search for Functional Education	9
The Language Issue	12
Conclusion	16
Footnotes	17
References	19

ABOUT THIS SERIES AND THIS PAPER

This Occasional Paper is the sixteenth in a series being published by the Centre for Continuing Education. Our aim is to contribute to the field of adult education by publishing monographs which originate here at The University of British Columbia and are deemed to be worthy of reaching a wider audience than would otherwise be the case.

The paper is a text of a public lecture delivered by Dr. Kwasi Ampene at the Faculty of Education, UBC, on March 16, 1978.

Dr. Ampene is Director of the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Ghana. He is visiting UBC during his sabbatical leave, and is a guest of the Adult Education Department in the Faculty of Education. Dr. Ampene has a B.A. in Sociology from the University of London and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Chicago. He is well known in adult education circles in Africa and overseas and has earned high respect among his colleagues. He has been concerned with the role of education in development in Africa and has given special attention to the structuring of educational preparation of teachers as it relates to development. Currently he is writing a textbook which he anticipates will be used in teacher training in Ghana and possibly in other African countries.

The Centre for Continuing Education is pleased to bring this insightful overview analysis of the challenges facing African educators and politicians to a wider audience.

Jindra Kulich
Director

PERSISTENT ISSUES IN AFRICAN EDUCATION

Introduction

Progress in any country, small or large, capitalist or socialist, depends largely on the quality of education that the citizens of a country have developed over the years to help them deal effectively with the challenges of their environment. For centuries the peoples of Africa had no say in the development of their educational systems: such questions as who should have education, what should be the objectives of education and how should education be organized were settled by the colonial powers who ruled Africa for centuries. Now the states of Africa are faced with political, economic and social problems some of which may be traced to the educational systems rooted in colonial traditions.

The objectives in this paper are to discuss (a) the various colonial policies on education with regard to the extent and type of education that the colonial powers provided for their African subjects; (b) the effects that the colonial educational systems have had on the political and socio-economic developments in African countries; and (c) the efforts being made in recent times in some countries, and the intentions expressed at conferences lately, to correct the dysfunctional results of the colonial systems of education.

Education in this context should be understood as referring to non-indigenous organized learning arrangements which include the formal system of education, non-formal and adult education and training. In this regard education was introduced into Africa as a result of the contact between Africa and Europe dating back to the 16th century.

By Africa, I am referring to the black states stretching from Mauritania in the north west; down to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland in the south; Ethiopia and newly independent Djibouti to the east; and Sudan, Niger, Chad and Mali to the north. The islands of Madagascar, Mauritius, the Comoros and Seyschelles are included in Africa. The area is usually referred to as Africa south of the Sahara, excluding the Republic of South Africa.

The peoples in this area live in 42 states (at the last count!) and number about 290 million with Nigeria alone accounting for about a quarter of the population of the entire area. Almost all these countries have recently

emerged from colonial rule with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia which had never been colonized, although in the context of the issues discussed in this paper the two countries face the same problems as those countries which were under colonial domination. The length of colonial rule varied from country to country, but it usually lasted from about 150 years to 300 years. The colonial powers were Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal. Britain still has responsibility for Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) whose independence is being negotiated. The decolonization period started with the independence of Ghana in 1957, with the majority of the countries in the area gaining their independence between 1957 and 1964.

Education Under Colonialism

The extent and the quality of education that a colonial power was prepared to give to the subjects in its colony depended on such considerations as whether the colonial power intended to settle its citizens permanently in the colony or wished to assimilate the colonial subjects into the culture of the metropolitan country.

In the French and Portuguese colonies where the policy was to make French and Portuguese citizens of the Africans, the indigenous people who were fortunate enough to have education were expected to have it in the purest form so as to qualify for full citizenship of the colonial power. Given the meagre resources of the colonies, and the fact that the policy of assimilation was honoured more in name than in practice, very few, almost an insignificant few, of the indigenous people were able to acquire the standard of education which would qualify them for citizenship. In the case of the French colonies, quite a few indigenous people were able to distinguish themselves as completely assimilated citizens of France, the most notable living person in this category being Leopold Sengor, the President of Senegal. Needless to say the policy of assimilation placed a high premium on the acquisition of the culture of the metropolitan country and discouraged the development of indigenous cultures.

Where the colonial power did not plan to settle its citizens permanently as was the case in British West Africa, the metropolitan power cared very little about education for the indigenous people. In these

countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia missionaries were the pioneers in providing educational opportunities. Given the limited resources of the missionaries whose main objective in providing education was to win converts, very few persons could be reached with formal education even at the elementary level.

The colonial government in British West Africa was eventually drawn into education for the colonial subjects in the twenties, but again the intention was not to provide education for all, but to train a minority of Africans who would provide supporting help to the colonial administration as clerks. While very few benefited from the opportunities offered for education, nevertheless, a small cadre of well-educated Africans emerged in these countries in the professions of law and medicine and provided the leadership that led to independence earlier in Ghana and Nigeria than in other countries of black Africa.

In Kenya, Zambia and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where Britain had the policy of settling its citizens, education for the indigenous people was in fact inimical to the interests of the metropolitan power, and therefore, it was provided at minimal level both in content and quantity. In Zambia, for instance, at the time of independence in 1964, there seemed to be hardly anybody above the age 40 who had had more than secondary level of education.(7)

The state of education in African countries in 1960 when many countries were ushered into independence may be summarized as follows:

(a) A fairly widespread system of primary education which had about 41 percent of the population described as of school age enrolled in primary schools. It should be pointed out however, that high drop-out rate, particularly in the rural areas led to an attrition rate of 60 percent among primary school students.(2) In the Francophone countries, because the policy of assimilation required high standards of achievement in French language and culture, the drop-out rate was very high; some studies carried out on the Ivory Coast, in Guinea, and in Senegal(6) showed that it required an average of 26 student years for every graduate who made it through the primary level of education.

(b) The percentage of the adult population described in the census of various countries as being illiterate ranged from 95-99 percent for some of

the Francophone countries, (again for the same reason as given above for the high drop-out rate), to 50 percent in a country like Lesotho where the language of literacy was a local language.

(c) The expenditure on education as a percentage of the total public expenditure had shown considerable increase even before independence, and ranged from 7.8 to 24.0 percent.(7)

(d) A fact which cannot be readily conveyed in figures and yet very important, was the degree of relevance of the educational systems to the challenges which the newly independent countries faced. For instance, how would a Senegalese who has been educated in the best traditions of French education be helped by this type of education to make a living in the near desert tropical environment of Senegal? Or, how would a Ghanaian or Nigerian educated in a British tradition with no clear objectives of what education should do for the educated person and his community react in the face of the special problems which the Nigerian or Ghanaian environment may pose?

Efforts to Expand Educational Opportunities Soon After Independence

Questions such as those relating to the relevance of the content of education for transforming the predominantly agricultural environment of the African countries were not asked in the feverish determination after independence to expand educational opportunities. "Education is the key that unlocks the door to modernization"[1] was the battle cry of African leaders as they mobilized their scarce resources to increase enrollment in their schools. Indeed, in some cases the lack of administrators and other much needed specialists such as doctors, teachers, and engineers to replace the departing colonial personnel was so acute that it would have been improper to dampen the enthusiasm to acquire education. For instance, a president of a newly independent country might be the first university graduate of his country and he might not have more than a dozen of his countrymen with his qualifications; another president might not have gone beyond the elementary school, and all the experience he had had of administration was in his own hastily formed political party to achieve independence.

My own country, Ghana, which was more fortunate at the time of independence than many other countries, had, in 1960, about 19 percent

literacy among the adult population, about 483,000 enrollment in primary schools, 179,000 in secondary schools and about 2,000 in higher institutions in Ghana as well as abroad.(7) There was a reasonably efficient civil service and a fair number of doctors, engineers, university graduate teachers in secondary schools and a few university professors. Ghana's population at the time was about 7 million. Even in that kind of situation our leaders thought that the surest way to modernization and development was to increase opportunities for schooling as fast as possible. This meant more of the colonial type of education which was a faded carbon copy of British education.

Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah introduced what was called the Accelerated Educational Development Plan as soon as he had some leeway with the British Colonial administration, which was in 1951 when Ghana was granted some measure of autonomy over her internal affairs. The objective of the Accelerated Educational Development Plan was to enroll as many children as possible in schools: conventional requirements such as classrooms and trained teachers were considered luxuries. It was decreed that the shade of trees should be used as classrooms until permanent structures could be put up; teachers could be persons with primary school education. The content of education and its organization were not changed, and no serious consideration was given to whether the educated person would acquire some basic skills that would promote economic development based on local resources.

The Conference of African Ministers of Education in Addis Ababa (1961) and After

The enthusiasm of Nkrumah and his government in Ghana about increasing educational opportunities was also evident in many other African countries. Between 1950 and 1960 enrollment in about 40 countries in the primary sector increased between 3 and 26 percent, and between 3 and 31 percent in the secondary sector. The ability of a country to expand its educational enrollment during the period depended on the extent that it benefited from the high commodity prices which prevailed in the decade following the Second World War. In view of these tremendous efforts that African countries were making to increase educational opportunities for their people, it was no wonder that when they had the opportunity of meeting for the first time as independent

states in 1961 to consider education (at the UNESCO sponsored conference of African Ministers of Education) they declared that they would be able to achieve 100 percent enrollment in primary schools by 1980.

The independent states of Africa pushed on with their efforts to achieve 100 percent enrollment in the primary schools as well as increasing substantially enrollment in secondary and higher education. Such avid pursuit of education led to comments such as one by McConnell: "To newly independent nations, education particularly in the higher levels is a symbol of national prestige in much the same manner as a steel mill."[2]

The rapid expansion of formal education happened at considerable cost to the countries concerned; public expenditure in education rose tremendously - sometimes four times faster than total enrollments, and in all cases considerably faster than either government revenue or the Gross National Product. UNESCO statistics (1974) on education show that expenditures on education as percentage of total national expenditure for African countries range from 12 to 31 percent. Among the industrialized countries only Canada and Japan reach the 20 percent level. Considering that the African countries which spend above 20 percent on their educational programs have per capita incomes ranging from $70 to $380, there is no doubt that the expenditure on education is a considerable strain on the budgets of many African countries.

From 1965 on, a levelling off of efforts in enrollment became noticeable - in a few cases a fall in percentage actually occured. For instance, Ghana which registered 74 percent enrollment in the primary sector in 1970 now has 67 percent. Furthermore, the high rate of drop-out mainly in rural areas and the painful probability that the youngsters who drop out will sooner or later relapse into illiteracy made the African governments aware of the high waste of resources that the formal system has given rise to.

In addition to the high cost of education, other problems resulting from the irrelevance of some aspects of the content and organization of education were also becoming increasingly apparent.

Unemployment Among School Leavers
(both Primary and Secondary)

Agriculture seems the obvious sector of the economy to be developed to

give employment to the majority of the people in African countries. There is the acute problem of producing enough food in quantity as well as in quality to feed the population which in some countries is increasing at the rate of three percent annually. The path towards industrialization seems to lie in the massive development of agriculture to support agro-based industries. This calls for active development of agriculture by applying the resources of education to it; unfortunately, the educational systems in many African countries seem to have overlooked the importance of agriculture in the educational tasks. This statement needs to be qualified because the wage structure in some countries favours white collar jobs. This is a carry-over from the colonial days when African administrative assistants and clerks were paid more than peasants for the obvious reason that the colonial administration considered such personnel more useful to the maintenance of the system than the peasants. Unfortunately, the disparity between the remuneration of the educated city dweller in white collar employment and that of the uneducated peasant in the rural area is so wide, that the educated youth naturally prefer to acquire the academic qualifications which will enable them to obtain jobs in the cities. For instance, cocoa provides Ghana with about 80 percent of her foreign exchange earnings and about 60 percent of government revenue, yet because of the poverty of the farmer and the lack of basic amenities such as good drinking water in the rural areas, farmers are not encouraging their children to take to cocoa farming; the result is that the industry now has farmers whose average age is over 60, and production has been falling.

Africa's reputation for having the fastest rate of urbanization is mainly due to the influx of rural youth (including the uneducated ones too) into the cities because of the wide gap that exists in the standards of living between the rural and urban areas.

In addition, the peasants in whose hands agriculture is at the moment, and who have no choice but to stay in the rural areas, are yet to be reached with effective educational programs which will enable them to increase their agricultural productivity.

Although there are opportunities for vocational training, particularly in the urban areas in such trades as masonry, carpentry, welding, plumbing and automobile repairs, yet vocational education does not appear to be fully

exploited to provide employment for the youth. Here again the wage structure has not encouraged young school leavers to learn some of these trades. For instance, Ghana used to have trade schools established in the twenties, but as administrative jobs paid more than carpentry and the like, the trades became the preserves of the uneducated. Now there are indications that the educated youth would be willing to learn some of these trades, but the strength of the economy will determine the demand for these skills, and this strength has to come from the development of agriculture which at the moment is unattractive to the school leavers.

Alienation of Educated Persons From Traditional Culture

The colonial system of education which was limited to a very small number of indigenous people tended to create an elite within the society. A Francophone West African who had achieved French citizenship tended to look to France for his standards. Similarly, in the Anglophone countries, persons who had high education tended to be snobbish and class conscious; some carried airs which made them unapproachable by their own uneducated kith and kin.

It is important to point out that the same education had different effects on people. While some educated persons went along with the cultural alienation that the foreign ideas induced, others were able to see through the dangers inherent in aping foreign ways of living. Such people, unfortunately, have always been in the minority in any society. The leadership in the movement for cultural revival that has characterized life in many African countries since they gained their independence has come from the minority of people whose western education did not blind them to the good in their own cultural heritage. Some have succeeded admirably in blending the different cultures which their education has exposed them to, and have achieved remarkable skills in both worlds.

Illiteracy and Low Priority for Adult and Non-formal Education

In the colonial period, there was a belated realization that the majority of the people who had not had any education constituted a drag on modernization. In the early fifties, the British government encouraged literacy programs and

community development in its colonies. Unfortunately, some of these efforts were not followed up in many African countries (with the remarkable exception of Tanzania) after the achievement of independence. The pre-occupation with increasing school enrollment led to the neglect of adult education generally. The World Experimental Literacy Project (WELP) sponsored by UNESCO and UNDP, and in which seven African countries participated out of a total of eleven countries from Asia, Latin America and, of course, from Africa, showed the extent of the neglect and disinterest that some African countries had in functional literacy. While literacy as such will not solve such problems as the migration of the educated youth into the cities, the provision of useful, functional literacy will go a long way in improving the capacity of the people for personal development as well as contributing to the national efforts in economic and social development. The evaluators of the World Experimental Literacy Project which covered a decade (1965-1975) were of the view that the minimal progress achieved in the project by the participating countries, with the exception of Tanzania which was the only country that had a viable literacy program at the end of the experimental period, was due more to lack of will power than to unavailability of resources as it is generally believed. In recent times, the World Bank and other international organizations concerned with problems of development in the less developed countries lay stress on functional education including literacy as a necessary component of every development project. For instance, a World Bank-supported project in the Upper Region of Ghana, with the objective of raising the productive capacity of about a million people, has functional education through literacy and radio as part of the project.

The Search for Functional Education

In view of the problems discussed in the foregoing paragraphs, such as the high cost of formal education, high unemployment among school leavers, the alienation of some educated people from their culture and communities, and the lack of educational opportunities for the majority of the people, African countries are looking for a new type of education that will help solve some of these problems. This search for functional and less expensive education has been evident at recent international conferences on African education and also in proposals for educational reforms in some African countries. For instance, at the conference of African Ministers of Education held in Lagos in 1976, the

resolutions and recommendations showed a new line of thinking on a number of issues.

(a) There is a redefinition of the purpose of education which is to enable the young as well as adults who participate in educational programs to appreciate the fact that education prepares those who engage in it for the world of work. While all education is not meant for work, there is however a clear desire to make education functional and to stress the need to equip the young with skills and attitudes which will enable them to deal better with the challenges of their environment than the colonial and academic education helped them to do. The desire is clearly expressed in the Declaration of the Lagos conference:

> ...the purpose of education is to educate the young while at the same time awakening in them a critical awareness of the status of their peoples and developing in each individual the values of work, progress and the cultural values of their civilization... to provide a new form of education, based on work and with work in mind should break down the barriers of prejudices which exist between town and countryside...[3]

(b) The earlier ambition to achieve 100 percent enrollment in primary schools has been reconsidered and thought to be unrealistic mainly because of the high cost of providing education. For instance, there is a West African country which spends 25 percent of its public expenditure on formal education, and at that rate of expenditure it is only able to put the same percentage of its school age children into school. If that country should attempt to achieve 100 percent enrollment, it means that it should spend the entire budget on education. The demands for overall economic development are so great that increasing expenditure on formal education is not feasible in many countries in the foreseeable future except for a country like Nigeria which has additional income from oil.

The opening sentence of Recommendation 14 of the African Ministers of Education Conference clearly shows that there is a change of mind on the issue of total enrollment by 1980: "Considering that many African countries may not be able to introduce universal primary educatic.i in the next decade..."

(c) Instead of providing education only for children, there is now the acceptance of the need to provide basic functional education for all, as a means of promoting economic and social development. This is clearly a departure from the thinking of the early sixties when education was only conceived in terms of schooling. The relevant sections of Recommendation 14 speaking to the issue read as follows:

> Considering that
>
> (a) each individual has the right to a minimum of education which will enable him to realize his potential and contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the nation to which he belongs,
>
> (b) that this development should result from the advancement of all and not only of a minority.

(d) In pursuing the objective of providing basic and functional education for all, there is the realization that the formal structures alone will either be inadequate or unsuitable in some respects. For instance, closing the gap between the classroom and the world of work implies that the formal system should be flexible to allow for real life experiences to be introduced into the learning process. This means that non-formal educational structures should be used more extensively to provide a wide range of learning opportunities.

Parts of Recommendation 9 speak to the need for making use of non-formal educational structures and methods as follows:

> <u>Conscious</u> of the need to provide a broader conceptualization of the education process beyond the scope of the formal system;

> Considering that non-formal education complements formal education and that it is a valuable short-term investment;
>
> Noting the many innovations now being made in the area of non-formal education;
>
> (The conference) Recommends that UNESCO organize as early as convenient a seminar involving other sectors to find appropriate ways of collaborating in conveying non-formal education to all segments of the population.
>
> (The conference) Further Recommends that governments should urgently consider allocating adequate funds for the organizatio. and functioning of this type of education.

(e) The conference also recognized the need to give non-formal and adult education the status that will enable this form of education to serve the needs of all without the fear that those who receive their education through the non-formal and adult education channels are receiving inferior education. The status recommended is the establishment of a Directorate of Non-formal Education in the national ministries of education. The Directors of Formal and Non-formal Education would then work out arrangements for integrating the two systems. Extracts of Recommendation 14 referring specifically to this issue are as follows:

> (The conference should) consider the establishment of national councils or boards for non-formal education and to establish structures within their ministries of education for the purpose of promoting non-formal education as an integral part of national education as a whole.

The Language Issue

The policies of African countries which language or languages to use in their educational systems differ, as each country is left to decide for itself what it thinks will be the best solution in its circumstances.

Africa is a land of many cultures and languages; within one country alone, as in Ghana, there may be as many as seven written local languages out of a dozen or more languages spoken by communities of varying sizes. Colonialism also introduced the languages of English, French and Portuguese for education, commerce and administration. Some colonial governments, particularly the British, permitted missionaries to develop local languages which were used as the media of instruction in primary schools. The main objective of the missionaries was to make the Bible available to their converts in the local languages, and they therefore developed as many languages as they could without the desire to establish a national language. Where the colonial government did not encourage the development of local languages, the language of the colonising power, French or Portuguese, became the only language for education as well as being the official language.

On the attainment of independence many African countries became aware of the need to preserve their cultures which can only be transmitted orally, and this meant that the neglect of their indigenous languages would eventually lead to the disappearance of the cultures. This position has received the support of UNESCO which has encouraged the use of local languages for literacy and, where possible, as the medium of instruction in early stages of schooling. Despite these efforts, there are only a few countries which use their local languages as national or official languages. The countries which have been able to do this have had the natural advantage of having a local language that is widely spoken such as Swahili in Tanzania or Somali in Somalia. The general position still is that the languages of the former colonial powers, which are now designated as international languages, perhaps to make them acceptable to fierce nationalists, are used for government and commerce as well as the media of instruction in education.

The multiplicity of languages in Africa - local languages as well as international languages - poses a number of problems or dilemma: first, there seems to be no hope of having a local language chosen as a national language in many countries in the foreseeable future, since to legislate in favour of one of the languages is to ask for protests or even war from the ethnic groups whose languages will be dropped. The situation in some African countries is as explosive as say in Sri Lanka where two major languages - Tamil and Senegalese - vie with each other for domination, at times with

bloodshed. It is hoped that time will allow the gradual emergence of a language which is so widely spoken that a legislation may not be contended to make it the national language.

The second problem raised by the present position of carrying many languages as media for instruction in some countries is the cost of providing reading materials. Obviously it will be cheaper to print in one language for a population of 10 million (the population of Ghana) than in eight languages as should be done at the moment in Ghana. In some countries with smaller populations, less than a million in some cases, the cost of printing learning materials in more than one language can be too expensive for the national budget.

The third problem is the fact that whatever may be the arguments in favour of preserving culture and making learning easy for new literates by not requiring them to learn a foreign language in addition to the task of learning to be literate, the international languages have the appeal because of their usefulness in communicating more widely outside one's own country. Some of the countries which have made a local language the national language as well as the official language, try to overcome the problem of being isolated from communicating with the wider world by stressing the learning of the international languages in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. These attempts are yet to prove that a country can ensure high proficiency in an international language for the highly educated persons as well as maintaining a local language for internal use.

The ordinary people, however, perceive the need to be proficient in an international language. I have been told on several occasions in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa by persons wanting to be literate that they wish to be literate in an international language because they know that an international language opens a wider avenue of communication for them than their own local languages. Some African countries, e.g. Senegal and Liberia, have decided to provide literacy only in an international language; others like Mali and Ghana are willing to provide the opportunity for literacy preferably in a local language and later in an international language if the persons already literate in a national language so wish. Because of the fact that an international language is often the official language in these countries, persons who make the effort to be literate, even if they agree to be literate

first in their local language, will sooner or later desire to be literate in the official international language. Governments which insist on using a local language for literacy should provide the opportunity for the new literates to use their new skills by printing official forms and notices in the language of literacy; until the new literate is given this opportunity, he will naturally desire to be literate in the official language.

Finally, there appears to be a greater desire to learn English in the Francophone countries of West Africa than there is to learn French in the Anglophone countries. For instance, the learning of English is compulsory in secondary education on the Ivory Coast and in Senegal while French is not a compulsory subject yet in any Anglophone country. Like everything else, the demand for learning a language depends on how the learner perceives it to be useful to him. In the Republic of Cameroons where both English and French are official languages, it seems that the French speaking majority in the community have a strong motivation to learn English because, perhaps, they see English as being the strongest of the international languages. The Anglophone speakers on the other hand, who are in the minority, and therefore at a disadvantage politically, are strongly motivated to learn French if they are to command political attention. Because there are these strong motives for learning the two international languages in the Cameroons, there is a high level of proficiency among the educated sections of the populations in the two international languages. It is no wonder that the Cameroons Republic has provided two General Secretaries in succession out of the three the Organization of African Unity has had since its inception in 1963.

There does not seem to be any hurry in settling the language issue by countries which have many written local languages as well as one international language for use in government, education and business. The attitude seems to be: "let sleeping dogs lie" until gradual evolution may lead to the emergence of a national language out of the multiplicity of local languages. The desire to hold on to the international languages is very strong, and all indications are that their study will be intensified in the years to come. For countries which have resolved the problem of many languages and have chosen an African language as the official language as well as the national language, their problem is how to guard against isolation from sharing in the world pool of knowledge which is available mostly in two or

three international languages. To learn or retain what language or languages seems to be the dilemma facing many African countries; my guess is that the answer to the question will be determined more by utilitarian considerations than those of nationalism.

Conclusion

At last most African countries, if not all, seem to have identified some of the ills that plague their educational systems and these are reflected in problems of social maladjustment. Some African countries, notably Tanzania, have already taken steps to remould their educational systems to respond to their needs. It is hoped that those countries to whom the realization to win their educational systems from their colonial past has come lately will translate the Lagos conference resolutions into action and provide basic functional education for all their citizens as well as bridge the gap between the world of work and the classroom.

It is necessary to emphasize that educational reforms are social reforms, and therefore ministries of education alone will be unable to achieve the desired objectives. It requires political will power that will be able to mobilize all sections of the nation - the poor and the rich, the employer and the employee and the urban as well as the rural dweller - to realize that functional education for all is in the best interest of all.

FOOTNOTES

1 Harbison, F. and Myers (ed.), Education, Manpower and Economic Growth: Strategies of Human Resource Development, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964, p. 181.

2 McConnell, Grant, "The Political Aims of Education and the Development of Nations", p. 40, in Robert Burns (ed.), Education and the Development of Nations, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1963.

3 UNESCO, Final Report of African Ministers of Education Conference, Lagos, 1976, Paris, UNESCO and UNDP Press, 1976.

REFERENCES

1. Ghana Government. Accelerated Educational Development Plan. Accra: Government Printer, 1951.

2. UNESCO. Statistical Yearbook, 1974. Paris: UNESCO.

3. -----. Final Report of the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, Addis Ababa, 1961. Paris: UNESCO.

4. -----. Current Educational Budgeting in Relation to the Goals of Addis Ababa. March, 1962. Paris: UNESCO.

5. -----. Final Report of African Ministers of Education Conference, Lagos, 1976. Paris: UNESCO and UNDP Press.

6. Berg, E.J. "Education and Manpower in Senegal, Guinea and the Ivory Coast" in Manpower and Education: Country Studies and Economic Development, Harbison and Myers (ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.

7. Jolly, R. Planning Education for African Development. (Makerere Institute of Social Research). Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969.

8. McConnell, Grant. "The Political Aims of Education in Developing Countries" in Education and the Development of Nations. Robert Burns (ed.), Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963.

9. World Bank. Education (Sector Paper). December, 1974.